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# Measuring Foreign Aid Effectiveness: Elite Capture of Foreign Aid Funds

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MEASURING FOREIGN AID EFFECTIVENESS: ELITE CAPTURE OF FOREIGN  
AID FUNDS

by

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

In an attempt to better understand where foreign aid is most effective for developmental purposes and poverty alleviation, this study takes a focused look at the correlation between democracy and corruption. High democratization is tested alongside corruption in foreign aid usage to determine if an inverse relationship exists. The implication is then that low levels of foreign aid corruption will be tied to increased effectiveness of development interventions. This increased effectiveness will then result in an increase of overall development. The research examines three African countries – Ghana, Zambia, Swaziland – through comparative case studies to test the democratic institutions and values that create a mechanism through which corruption is stopped, including the proper ministries and agencies to increase accountability as well as elections and open press for transparency. Understanding the necessary but not sufficient role democracy plays in impeding corruption can then help create conditionalities for foreign aid moving forward.

## Introduction

The aid industry has been a largely controversial part of the international community, especially when foreign aid given for developmental purposes has not produced the levels of poverty alleviation strongly sought after and expected. One question is whether aid in its entirety, or in any capacity, can directly cause development to occur or whether a large aid influx hinders growth. Different fields of thought from William Easterly's rejection of all forms of intervention to Jeffrey Sach's call for dramatic aid increase by donor countries to Banerjee and Duflo's middle ground of foreign intervention at the margin have been considered and contested. Regardless of the approach, however, it remains true that developing countries under the current aid system have seen unimpressive results, "Although there are exceptions to the generalization that foreign aid has failed by and large the recipients of foreign aid have not improved the quality of life of their citizens and for many the quality of life has declined"<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this research is to look at what circumstances might deem aid more developmentally beneficial, if such instances exist, and if donors are able to cater to

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics* (Los Angeles: Sage/CQ Press, 2014), 388.

these circumstances when giving international assistance. Looking back at the history of foreign aid from its beginning stages post-World War II through the implementation of the Marshall Plan in 1948, aid has largely been tied to conditionality, in that recipient governments were expected to adopt certain policies or reform current policy if aid was to be given. During the onset of the Cold War, recipients of the Marshall Plan were required to adopt free-market policies<sup>2</sup>. After this initial donation to recipient countries, the success seen in the growth of Western European economies was attributed to the money presented by the Plan and a model for formal foreign aid was established.

However, even though the world today heavily utilizes the aid industry, there is no dramatic improvement in the quality of life for developing countries. While tied aid or the conditionality of aid, like that of the Marshall Plan, exists, aid is widely given to varying regime types and leaders that cannot be defined as fully democratic or liberal. For example Swaziland, one of the last absolute monarchies in the world, received about 85.9 USD million in official development assistance for 2014<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of foreign aid for development purposes dependent on varying regime types and to understand the policy implications this may hold.

Determining whether aid given to certain regime types is more effective for development than to others could have major policy consequences for aid recipients and donors alike.

The objective of this research is to determine whether a causal relationship exists between levels of democracy within a recipient country and the amount by which foreign aid is effectively utilized. Therefore, a comparative case study was conducted in an

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<sup>2</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics*.

<sup>3</sup> "Aid at a glance by recipient," OECD, accessed March 17, 2016, [https://public.tableau.com/views/OECDDACAidataglancebyrecipient\\_new/Recipients?%3Aembed=y&%3Adisplay\\_count=yes&%3AshowTabs=y&%3Atoolbar=no%3F&%3AshowVizHome=no](https://public.tableau.com/views/OECDDACAidataglancebyrecipient_new/Recipients?%3Aembed=y&%3Adisplay_count=yes&%3AshowTabs=y&%3Atoolbar=no%3F&%3AshowVizHome=no)

attempt to trace causality, if any causality exists. Given the multidimensional nature of the argument on foreign aid effectiveness, searching for proper measures of foreign aid distribution must begin on a more narrowly defined level. This study focuses closely on how the relationship between elites and constituents with regard to corruption can have an affect on the utilization of foreign aid.

The relationship in question is that of a sovereignty contract between governments and their promise to provide for their constituents. Sovereignty contracts are formed as the bedrock of governmental institutions – allowing a greater body to protect and provide for citizens in return for some form of payment and authority. Without the presence of a strong contract, and with recipient governments continually catering to donors or country elites, the constituents’ needs could be largely forgotten. Aid given for development purposes could then be ineffective if the government does not feel the need to support their citizens. Corruption, or the siphoning of aid for private gains, could become the reality of donor-recipient relationships. What results from a loss of sovereignty contract between the government and constituents is a situation of aid dependency:

Furthermore, the pervasive culture of aid dependency makes it near impossible for Africans to hold their governments to account for failing to provide the basic requirements to enable food production, and to penalize them for bad behaviors such as corruption.<sup>4</sup>

Loss of public goods is specifically a consequence of aid dependency – resulting in health, education, infrastructure, and national security sectors taking hits to productivity and general improvement<sup>5</sup>. Through the misuse of funds and a lack of concern for

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<sup>4</sup> Dambisa Moyo, “Does aid work? No says Dambisa Moyo,” *New Statesman* 141 (2012): 26.

<sup>5</sup> Moyo, “Does aid work? No says Dambisa Moyo”.

constituent needs and interests, large aid inflows do not contribute to the overall development of the population.

### **Research Question**

The question then becomes – for countries at similar levels of development, can democracy limit elite capture of foreign aid funds? To understand under what types of environments foreign aid is distributed most effectively and should or should not be delivered for development purposes must come from an understanding of the type of government in the recipient country. This question identifies the variables to be measured that provide a more structured and focused analysis. The dependent variable is the elite capture of foreign aid funds, particularly emphasizing the misuse of funds for corrupt purposes within the recipient governments, including all senior and high-level officials. The independent variable is the level of democracy within the recipient government based on factors determined from the literature on democracy and development. The controlled variables include level of development, geographic region, and colonial history of each recipient government.

### **Literature Review**

Understanding corruption in the context of elite misuse requires a look at grand corruption specifically. This is defined as corruption that “occurs at the highest levels of government and involves major government projects and programs”<sup>6</sup>. Corruption by these high level officials oftentimes results in less money spent on infrastructure and maintenance of the public sector. Public investments that are made are done so without real impact or development prospects. On the contrary, “capital-intensive projects” such

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Rose Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 27.

as construction projects are more often pursued and the money easily siphoned for ineffective means, “Corrupt officials distort public sector choices to generate large rents for themselves and to produce inefficient and inequitable public policies”<sup>7</sup>. The desire of politicians to be reelected dictates their pursuance of certain projects and investments – the need to remain in office dominates their rationale. With this in mind, anti-corruption strategies must then include incentivization of politicians to provide public gains that matter rather than superficial public investments, education to better equip voters with knowledge of this process, and institutional changes to create stability that decrease the incentive for politicians to seek immediate, private benefit. All these measures shift focus from the short-term to the long-term, extending stability within the government.

The logic of elites attempting to accrue private benefit from public provisions is supported by selectorate theory. This theory of strategic action explains that the decisions made by the selectorate, or those who take part in the choosing of a leader, are largely influenced by the size of the winning coalition, or the subgroup whose support dictates whether the leader stays in office or not. Democracies hold larger winning coalitions and larger selectorates while autocracies have smaller winning coalitions, “As the size of the winning coalition increases, leaders shift that mix away from the provision of private benefits and towards the provision of public goods”<sup>8</sup>. Aid, a benefit for the recipient government, then becomes an instrument manipulated by the interest of the leaders. When the leaders in a larger coalition government cater more toward their constituents as a whole, the aid is disseminated across a larger range of the polity. Examining the distribution of foreign aid for specific types of governments through a look at selectorate

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<sup>7</sup> Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics*, 86.

theory allows for the relationship between governments and their constituents to be considered in light of rationality and self-interest, “It clarifies why aid is more welcome by petty dictators than by their subjects and why aid hinders democratization rather than promotes it”<sup>9</sup>. Private gain of a smaller winning coalition means aid will not be disseminated to a wider population. Democracy in this sense requires that the winning coalition be won over by more public goods and benefits, thereby ensuring the leaders maintain their position in office. The idea here is that more people must be appeased in democracy for the leader to stay in power, an idea Lipset explains through the strong presence of a middle class.

For Lipset, development creates a larger middle class, which moderates extremists through a middle class desire to maintain the amount of wealth they currently hold. Larger class distinctions result in greater pressures and differences between members of society, which in turn can generate greater instability and potential for elites to be thrown out of power. A larger middle class then inevitably generates democratization for a society. Lipset defines democracy as, “a political system that supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials”<sup>10</sup>. Within democracy, there exist certain conditions where the political system develop including the existence of a belief system, political leaders, and out of office leaders that act as opposition to the leaders in office. These are the specific values and institutions that allow democracy to persist in and of itself, without which absolutism and maximized authority of leaders would exist. For Lipset specifically, the argument is that, “the more well-to-do a nation,

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<sup>9</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics*, 384.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *The American Political Science Review* 53 (1959): 71.



the greater chances that it will sustain democracy”<sup>11</sup>. The democratic political system is then looked at through its relation to legitimacy and economic development.

Socioeconomic development results through four factors – industrialization, urbanization, the education of citizens, and wealth generation – that result in a more sustainable democratic system.

The literature on corruption is largely dominated by the belief that development represents the causal mechanism by which corruption is or is not prevalent within a society. Treisman specifically believes the robustness of data surrounding corruption and economic development is this explanatory variable. While certain characteristics of corrupt societies exist, they have not presented strong enough linkages to explain corruption. For example, “We now know that states are perceived by business people and their citizens to be less corrupt if they are highly developed, long-established liberal democracies, with a free and widely read press, a high share of women in government, and a long record of openness to international trade”<sup>12</sup>. On the opposite side, countries are more corrupt if they “depend on fuel exports, have intrusive business regulations, and suffer from unpredictable inflation”<sup>13</sup>. However, across different measures and studies, the data is inconsistent.

The literature on corruption stops at development as the causal mechanism. While the literature is becoming richer, corruption data is not entirely reliable for a number of reasons: Treisman explains that corruption is entirely defined and determined by perceptions – both cultural and individual standards for how corruption does or does not

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<sup>11</sup> Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” 75.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Treisman, “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption From Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (2007): 241.

<sup>13</sup> Treisman, “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption From Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” 241.

present itself, and how interactions between individuals or groups work in certain contexts. “Comparability across surveys” as well as “comparability of responses across countries” are major concerns faced in corruption studies with the potential to distort findings<sup>14</sup>. This allows room for biases and misconceptions surrounding interactions, which is largely problematic when researchers attempt to use these perceptions of corruption to make determinations regarding democracy, equality, and other social or institutional features of government.

With these inconsistencies in mind, the causal mechanism for corruption may not simply be development. Another widespread explanation looks at “good governance” or how democratic a country is. The correlation may be that with higher levels of democracy, corruption levels decrease. Other corruption literature, such as Mark Warren, looks at what he labels, “corruption as duplicitous exclusion”, or the idea that corruption and the democratic political process have a harmful relationship with each other when exclusion or secrecy within the democratic institutions exists, which is a more narrow focus on some aspects of Ackerman’s argument<sup>15</sup>. While the connection between democratic ways and good governance is one that Warren supports, corruption becomes a way democracy can take a downward turn. He examines typical institutions of democracy including “voting, engaging in public discourse and judgments, organizing and joining within civil society organizations, and decentralized/deconcentrated political power” that constitute inclusion within government<sup>16</sup>. With the potential for corruption to ruin democratic institutions, anti-corruption acts as a means of democratic empowerment. Several mechanisms exist by which democracy as a set of institutions can mitigate

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<sup>15</sup> Mark Warren, “Democracy Against Corruption,” *Conference on the Quality of Government* (2005): 3.

<sup>16</sup> Warren, “Democracy Against Corruption,” 3.

corrupt practices. These include the existence of personal freedoms and the ability of rule of law to maintain these freedoms, delineated into certain societal norms and institutions. The questions to be asked in the analysis of corruption revolve around these two aspects of governance and frameworks that exist.

The presence of these frameworks can also dictate the level of democracy within a government. Levitsky and Way break apart how democratic a government can be, “Different mixes of authoritarian and democratic features have distinct historical roots, and they may have different implications for economic performance, human rights, and the prospects for democracy”<sup>17</sup>. The authors specifically examine competitive authoritarianism, characterized by upholding democratic institutions. However, “incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent... that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy”<sup>18</sup>. This being the case, competitive authoritarian governments fail to uphold four minimum criteria for democracies. These include open, free, and fair elections; universal suffrage; protection of political rights and civil liberties; and authority of elected officials to govern. The ways in which these failures exist, however, are largely presented in more subtle forms of violation such as “bribery, co-optation, and various forms of persecution”<sup>19</sup>. Yet, the existence of the democratic institutions, while still being flawed, hinders outright persecution as seen in full-scale authoritarianism. Four areas of democratic contestation – the electoral arena, the legislative arena, the judiciary, and the media – allow for autocrats and flawed democratic institutions to be challenged, “The presence of elections,

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<sup>17</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 52.

<sup>18</sup> Levitsky and Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” 52.

<sup>19</sup> Levitsky and Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” 59.

legislatures, courts, and an independent media creates periodic opportunities for challenges by opposition forces”<sup>20</sup>.

For Alexander and Welzel, the varying levels of democracy are dependent on the capacity for the state to implement the rule of law. The authors define democracy as literally government for the people, thereby requiring that democracy empower the people as a primary requirement. The empowerment of people is done by, “... two forms of freedom: the freedom to follow their [the people’s] personal preferences in their private lives and the freedom to make their political preferences count in public life”<sup>21</sup>. This is done through the use of certain institutions such as political pluralism or independent judiciaries that allow for popular rights to be used effectively. The practice of rule of law to guarantee popular rights essentially defines what constitutes an effective versus nominal democracy. When popular rights are given, but the rule of law is not instituted, nominal democracy results. In contrast, when popular rights are given and rule of law is instituted, effective democracy results. The ability to exercise democracy is then shown to be rooted in socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts – greater development and distribution of resources results in an increased ability to participate in politics and popular rights. In this case, the literature effectively incorporates development within the context of increased democratic levels thereby resulting in lower levels of corruption. Treisman supports this sort of pattern as well.

Understanding the institutions that qualify the presence of democracy makes understanding the resulting corruption that can occur more evident. Susan Rose Ackerman writes that incentives for corruption to arise within democracies “depend on

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<sup>20</sup> Levitsky and Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” 59.

<sup>21</sup> Amy C. Alexander and Christian Welzel, “Measuring Effective Democracy: The Human Empowerment Approach,” *Comparative Politics* 43 (2011): 273.

the organization of electoral and legislative processes” as well as “method of campaign finance”<sup>22</sup>. Corruption is directly tied to political structures and their connection with private wealth. Ackerman identifies three dimensions by which corruption occurs – through the ability of politicians to receive private gains, how legal this process is, and the strength of political relationships in this context<sup>23</sup>.

### **Hypothesis**

Given the aforementioned literature on democracy and corruption, it can be predicted that as levels of democracy increase, corrupt uses of foreign aid will decrease. Therefore, the lower levels of corruption correlate with the level of democratic institutions, political rights, and civil liberties present within a society. The presence of these mechanisms within society is what ultimately determine the strength of the social contract between governments and their constituents. Stronger commitment to democratic institutions and values creates more accountability from the government to provide for their citizens with public goods. With a broken commitment by elites to their constituents, grand corruption becomes more likely.

The hypotheses gleaned from this discussion are as follows – First, levels of corruption in foreign aid usage will correlate with the levels of democracy within the country, the two being inversely related. Secondly, low levels of foreign aid corruption result in increased effectiveness of development interventions. Finally as a concluding hypothesis, increased effectiveness of these interventions leads to an increase in overall development. For this research in particular, only the initial hypothesis relating to corruption and democracy levels will be investigated. This salient hypothesis is required

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<sup>22</sup> Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*, 127.

<sup>23</sup> Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*.

to decipher if the independent variable, that is the level of democracy, is a necessary and sufficient condition for overall aid effectiveness.

While some parts of the literature say corruption levels are dependent on the level of development, this study attempts to determine that another cause may exist as mentioned above— that is, the level of democracy or presence of democratic institutions within the country creates the path for corruption to manifest or not. It is predicted that there are certain measures within government, in the form of institutions, which limit corruption. These institutions act as an accountability measure for the government's commitment to the needs of its citizens, thereby enforcing the social contract. Since foreign aid is a public good to be allocated for development, there needs to exist specific institutions that cater to tracking foreign aid inflow and distribution. These can include the ability of citizens to hold their governments accountable through anti-corruption enforcement and elections; the presence of independent portions of government to hold the central government to commitments; and the availability of information to citizens.

### **Variables**

The independent variable for this research is the level of democracy within each specified country. The difference between these levels of democracy will be determined by the Freedom House measures, a significant tool to understand the realization of political rights and civil liberties. This measure is particularly important since it focuses on individuals, rather than the governments, and the implementation of policy to promote democratic values – Freedom House's *Freedom in the World Report*, “assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or

government performance per se”<sup>24</sup>. The distinction in these measurements is that democratic policy, while it may exist, is not always effectively implemented. While perhaps being democratic in the name, the adherence to democratic institutions and norms is highly uneven from country to country. Therefore, the research will look at adherence to democratic institutions through Freedom House. Based upon a rating scale of one to seven in either political rights or civil liberties, Freedom House generates an average of the score and assigns the country within the categories of Free (1.0 to 2.5), Partly Free (3.0 to 5.0), or Not Free (5.5 to 7.0). When establishing the measures, Freedom House uses a scale of ten different political rights indicators including the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning government. Fifteen civil liberties indicators include freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights.

The dependent variable for this study is the level of capture or corrupt usage of foreign aid funds. Corruption in itself is a wildly challenging aspect of society to measure for several reasons previously touched upon. While certain ways of measuring corruption exist such as Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, it is important to note that this index specifically takes into account varying perceptions and standards for governmental behavior. It is acknowledged that a wide spectrum of what constitutes corruption within different sectors can lead to a lack of richness in measurements<sup>25</sup>. This being the case, the measurements based on the Index include a general score of corruption ranging from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (clean) as well as a ranking of the 175

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<sup>24</sup> “Freedom in the World,” Freedom House, accessed January 31, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2014>.

<sup>25</sup> “Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results,” Transparency International, accessed March 14, 2016, <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>.

countries for which there is data available, with Denmark ranking first as the most clean and Somalia and North Korea ranked last as the most corrupt. The countries are likewise given a score from 0 (most corrupt) to 100 (most clean). From this point, TI includes several more indicators for understanding the government's institutions and civil society of the country. These other indicators include that of the control of corruption, openness of budget, global competitiveness, judicial independence, rule of law, freedom of the press, and voice and accountability. More specification allows for a better understanding of what parts of democratization potentially open the doors to further corruption.

The variable to measure corrupt uses of foreign aid include the USAID and other international organizational reports that have specifically investigated corruption with regards to foreign aid distribution and tracking. The study's measure of corruption is a descriptive variable of a qualitative analysis from these reports arising from how much of this aid is being siphoned off. The data is therefore not perfect, but a solid foundational measure to understanding and tracking elite use of aid funds. The country-specific reports are similar to the CPI measures in that they focus on perceived corruption within the society, though they provide uniqueness as well. These focused examinations look at the society as a whole to determine the multifaceted environment through which foreign aid is filtered. Depending on the institutions available to track aid inflows, as well as the perceived governmental commitment to anti-corruption and the ability of citizens to voice their concern for anti-corruption strategies, these country-specific reports give a better understanding of the standing environment. The corruption measurements will focus primarily on the availability and accessibility of aid information to the general public. This includes the use of aid by the donors; the accessibility constraints including



the ability of citizens to connect with internet resources, pay for internet use, and access it throughout the area; and the potential capacity of citizens to utilize this information based on understanding of corruption and awareness<sup>26</sup>. These measures include the institutions that handle aid distribution such as the Ministry of Finance, and the mechanisms by which the aid is tracked (i.e. manually or electronically). Reliance on this data along with the Corruption Perception Index is crucial for targeting corruption at large while also concentrating on corruption of the foreign aid sector. Corruption will also be evaluated through the specific aid sectors it is distributed through based on official development assistance (ODA) sector divisions including education; health and population; other social infrastructure and services; economic infrastructure; production; multisector; production; program assistance; action relating to debt; humanitarian aid; and other/unspecified sectors<sup>27</sup>.

### **Research Design**

The resulting case studies to compare are that of Ghana, Zambia, and Swaziland. Africa remains the largest recipient continent of aid, receiving “over \$1trn of international aid over the past 50 years, intended for health care, education infrastructure and agriculture, among other things”<sup>28</sup>. This aid primarily consists of long-term commitments by donor countries to the recipient governments. However, Africa still holds a disproportionately high amount of the world’s poor and impoverished. This long-term dependency has created an environment where governments “are deprived of their incentive to carry out essential reforms to attract much-needed investment, spur growth

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<sup>26</sup> “Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment,” USAID, accessed May 2, 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/AidTransparencyCountryPilotAssessment.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> “Aid at a glance by recipient.”

<sup>28</sup> Dambisa Moyo, “Does aid work? No says Dambisa Moyo,” 25.

and meaningfully reduce poverty”<sup>29</sup>. The loss of a sovereignty contract specifically between African governments and their constituents has had a negative impact on the economy as well as a significant influence on instances of corruption.

The issues involved with recipient governments and their use of foreign aid is likewise salient in this continent, as it also has high instances of emerging democracies. These democracies are said to emerge particularly through the establishment of democratic elections that are touted as open, free, and fair. However, as the study attempts to deduce, whether these regime types are authentically democratic or not could have large consequences for the actual utilization of foreign aid funds.

Given the distinctiveness of African aid, the control variables within this experiment are drawn from the three recipient governments examined. In each case, the countries were selected for their levels of development, geographic location, and historical background. The control for these variables allows for a stronger causality argument. All three countries represent similar levels of development dependent on HDI measures from low to middle HDI (0.505-0.63) based on the 2014 index measures<sup>30</sup>. Each country from the list of 33 low to middle HDI countries was designated and controlled for by their location in Africa, as mentioned in the research design. From this point, each of these African countries at similar HDI levels were chosen based on their history of colonization – all three having been colonized by the British with similar colonial reign and gaining independence within ten years of one another, between 1957

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<sup>29</sup> Dambisa Moyo, “Does aid work? No says Dambisa Moyo,” 25.

<sup>30</sup> “Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development,” United Nations Development Programme, accessed March 17, 2016, [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_human\\_development\\_report\\_1.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report_1.pdf).

and 1968. The time control allows for more of a handle regarding the literature on transition democracies versus fully consolidated democracies.

The controlled comparison of these different countries will create an environment of “most similar” cases, all existing within a specified sub-class, which attempt to be alike in all aspects except the independent variable<sup>31</sup>. After conducting the case studies of each country, initial data was gathered and generalized, broad questions asked regarding significant corruption indicators and corruption within the foreign aid sector. Since fieldwork cannot be conducted for each country, proxy data based on historical reports by major aid distributors will inform the results. The final analysis of data encompasses all measurements and distinctions between the cases to come to general conclusions and policy implications.

## **Case Studies**

### **I. Ghana**

The Corruption Perception Index ranks Ghana as the 61<sup>st</sup> most corrupt country out of the 175 countries for which data is available. The country is attributed a score of 48, indicating that Ghana is more corrupt than it is clean<sup>32</sup>. Transparency International gathered data within a span of four years, to investigate the different aspects of Ghanaian government and society by which corruption can be measured. Ghana’s control of corruption or the preventative measures taken by the government is in the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, with a score of 0.0889 which shows Ghanaian corruption control is just above the median level of 0 from -2.5 to 2.5. The Ghanaian budget is more open to public access than not, though only shows a score of 54 corresponding with “some” in the open budget category.

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<sup>31</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2005), 81.

<sup>32</sup> “Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results.”

Ghana is ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> out of 142 countries measured for global competitiveness with a score of 3.79/7, making it a relatively low global competitor. Judicial independence is ranked 59/142 with a score of 4.1/7, just past the median level towards more independence. Rule of law shows a similar trend of being close to the median, with a rounded score of -0.0717. The freedom of the press index ranks Ghana as 41<sup>st</sup> out of 179 countries for which the data is gathered, with a score of 11.00 out of 100. Finally, voice and accountability is 63 percent, with a score of 0.4937.

Of the three countries examined in this study, Ghana receives the greatest amount of aid, reaching 1,126.4 USD million as of 2014. The majority of Ghanaian aid this year was allocated to the social infrastructure and service sector (28 percent), while the health and population sector runs second at 18 percent and economic infrastructure comes third at 12 percent<sup>33</sup>. According to research on the infrastructural projects in Ghana, weak governance for these projects is seen through “the absence of laid down procedures for procurement, non-enforcement of laid-down control principles, abuse of managerial powers, lax supervision, non-existence of codes of conduct, and improper payments and accounting systems”<sup>34</sup>. While the Ghanaian government gives infrastructure projects and the construction industry top priority when it comes to foreign investments, lack of transparency and accountability leads to corruption within procurement activities of the projects. The 2003 Public Procurement Act attempted to challenge weaknesses in the

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<sup>33</sup> “Aid at a glance by recipient.”

<sup>34</sup> E. Osei-Tutu, E. Badu, D. Owusu-Manu, “Exploring corruption practices in public procurement of infrastructural projects in Ghana,” *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business* 3 (2010): 244.

process of carrying out infrastructural projects, though the actualization of this act had barriers as well<sup>35</sup>.

Foreign assistance to Ghana can be better understood through a look at its history. Since 1983, Ghana has seen large implementation of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in an attempt to spur growth in GDP for overall development of the country. However, while this theory formed the foundation of the World Bank and IMF's implementation of the programs globally, the resulting growth benefits were seen more on a macro-level than a micro-level, and development did not lead to lower levels of inequality<sup>36</sup>. Since the programs required cuts in public expenditures, the results were improved GDP paired with much higher levels of societal inequalities, "While many African economies undergoing structural adjustment may experience unprecedented socioeconomic growth, judging by standard economic indicators, they may also experience uneven development, decreasing standards of living, increasing poverty, and reduced access to basic services"<sup>37</sup>. With the downsizing of public services and cutbacks on education, health and welfare, the initial phase of SAPs resulted in sixty-two percent of funds granted to physical infrastructure while only five percent was allocated to health and education. With decreased access to health and education and user fees instituted for these services to be available, inequalities rose drastically.

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<sup>35</sup> Osei-Tutu, Badu, Owusu-Manu, "Exploring corruption practices in public procurement of infrastructural projects in Ghana."

<sup>36</sup> Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang, "The Best of Times and the Worst of Times: Structural Adjustment Programs and Uneven Development in Africa: The Case of Ghana," *The Professional Geographer* 52 (2004).

<sup>37</sup> Konadu-Agyemang, "The Best of Times and the Worst of Times: Structural Adjustment Programs and Uneven Development in Africa: The Case of Ghana," 469.

Moving past SAPs, macroeconomic stability, and liberalization towards import-substitution industrialization was the next step for economic growth that Ghana unfortunately did not have the opportunity to pursue. On the contrary, “their ability to do so was hindered by two main factors: the return to multiparty rule and the onset of aid dependence”<sup>38</sup>. From 1964 to 1992, Ghana saw a period of military rule. When democratic reforms changed the government in 1992, the success of GDP growth through the SAPs leading to increase in donor attention, paired with the new political incentive of high officials to remain in power, took over Ghanaian focus – “After the key architects of the reforms left the [NDC] government, the reform effort stalled at the liberalisation stage, and the pursuit of reforms was characterised by less rigour and commitment”<sup>39</sup>. Focus on short-term election commitments caused long-term development and economic reform to take a backseat. When the “medium-term” policy reform “The Goals of Vision 2020” proposed economic, socioeconomic, infrastructure strengthening, and an increased commitment for providing public sector services was proposed, donors would not back the changes and the reform saw no actualization. Continued attempts to cater to donor interests without creating an effective national policy making process characterized the government moving forward. After years of military rule, Ghana saw a constitutional revival in 1992, resulting in the current presidential republic with four popular, contentious parties<sup>40</sup>.

USAID conducted a pilot assessment of Ghana aid effectiveness in 2014, during which the Ghanaian government had no mechanism by which aid inflows were tracked

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<sup>38</sup> Lindsay Whitfield, “The State Elite, PRSPs and policy Implementation in Aid-dependent Ghana,” *Third World Quarterly* 31 (2010): 725.

<sup>39</sup> Whitfield, “The State Elite, PRSPs and policy Implementation in Aid-dependent Ghana,” 725.

<sup>40</sup> “The World Factbook,” Central Intelligence Agency, accessed May 14, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>.

and monitored. The assessment included information regarding how aid moved from the initial funding commitment down to the constituent level for project implementation.

Ghana is currently ranked as one of the most advanced African countries for governance and democratization, and through their involvement with the Open Government Partnership, a strong public commitment was made by the government for the transparency of aid inflows<sup>41</sup>. This partnership included both an Open Data Initiative and use of the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Ghana saw high levels of functional, stable, and committed democratic institutions, which are largely accepted and liked by the public. Further commitments had been made by the Ghanaian government to call for accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in governance through certain institutional establishments and processes.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is involved directly with these measures to increase transparency, but as the USAID report shows, the institutions for aid tracking still show room for improvement. Initiatives and proposals for a stronger aid tracking system have been made, though there is currently no strong management system in place. Information about aid inflows by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) are only available online, while most Ghanaian's have limited or no access to internet and some reports are only made available upon request. "In some cases, line ministries undertake separate efforts to collect information from donors", such as the Department of Policy, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, but the primary purpose of this data collection is for internal uses only<sup>42</sup>. Means of accessing information on aid flows are complicated by the lack of access to the Ministry of Finance itself (unless one has personal connections), and an

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<sup>41</sup> "Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment."

<sup>42</sup> "Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment," 77.

underdeveloped media outlet. When asked about how to improve avenues for data access on aid inflows, key stakeholders from the Ghanaian government identified specifically some governmental institutions that could potentially improve transparency. Their conclusions were that information needed to be channeled, “through the Office of the Auditor General, parliamentary commissions, local offices of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), as well as district authorities”<sup>43</sup>. Likewise, the capacity of citizens to find, access, understand, and utilize data would improve governmental accountability and transparency.

## II. Zambia

Zambia, represented as the partially free country by Freedom House measures, shows corruption levels that correspond with the hypothesis in comparison with that of Ghana. Zambia is ranked the 85<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country and given a score of 38, making it significantly more corrupt than Ghana by about ten points. Control of corruption is 33 percent and given a score of -0.5734, relatively close to the median but likewise significantly worse than Ghana’s score. This is also the case with the open budget index’s “minimal” score of 36. However, Zambia and Ghana are ranked just next to each other for global competitiveness with Zambia at the 102<sup>nd</sup> place of 142 and a score just .1 below that of Ghana – 3.8/7. Judicial independence is 82/142, scoring a 3.5/7, making the Zambian judiciary just at the median between entire dependence and complete independence. Rule of law is 38 percent, with a score of -0.4939. Voice and accountability is 39 percent with a score of -0.2642. All the above-mentioned corruption measures align with the hypothesis as a “partially free” country showing higher levels of

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<sup>43</sup> “Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment,” 83.



corruption than the “free” country of Ghana. The measure for freedom of the press places Zambia as 86<sup>th</sup> of 179 countries and with a score of 30<sup>44</sup>.

Zambia was the second sub-Saharan African country to emerge as democratic, electing their first president in 1991, Frederick Chiluba<sup>45</sup>. Following an authoritarian regime, Chiluba was a champion of democratic values during the election, though rampantly engaged in corrupt uses of public money for his private benefit upon gaining office. The next election nominated Mwanawasa, an unknown and inexperienced lawyer, “Notwithstanding the baggage of a tainted nomination and election, low levels of trust in the president and persistent popular concerns about Zambia’s democracy, President Mwanawasa pledged to combat corruption”<sup>46</sup>. However, the new government did not make anti-corruption measures a priority and Mwanawasa was perceived as weak – only able to win through Chiluba’s influence. In 2006, Zambia attributed about 50 percent of its national budget to donor financing. Anti-corruption measures and prosecution of Chiluba was a conditionality strongly tied to that aid, making Zambia one of the only countries to have actualized persecution of a president based on corruption charges. Like Ghana, Zambia is a presidential republic, having just elected its sixth president in 2015<sup>47</sup>.

As of 2014, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) distribution of Zambian aid shows the sectors receiving the greatest distribution of aid is that of the health and population sector, constituting 38 percent of ODA, and social infrastructure and services at the same percentage. High HIV/AIDs prevalence

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<sup>44</sup> “Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results.”

<sup>45</sup> Scott D. Taylor, “Divergent Politico-Legal Responses to Past Presidential Corruption in Zambia and Kenya: catching the ‘big fish’, or letting him off the hook?” *Third World Quarterly* 27 (2006).

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, “Divergent Politico-Legal Responses to Past Presidential Corruption in Zambia and Kenya: catching the ‘big fish’, or letting him off the hook?” 286.

<sup>47</sup> “The World Factbook.”

corresponds with the strong focus, especially by the US, for aid to the health sector. The emphasis of aid on social infrastructure and services can be better understood by examining the long history of land reform throughout Zambia's Kaunda regime, soon after independence. The period of economic socialism and intense nationalism that followed Zambian independence established a system of central planning and rid the country of a competitive market for land entirely. It was not until the 1995 Land Act that new land reform legislation was instituted due to a need for international aid, "Land market reform was not only an electoral pledge, it was also one of the key conditionalities that the Zambian government was required to meet in order to restructure its international debt"<sup>48</sup>. While the liberalization lessened the state's hold on undeveloped land and established institutions that protect leaseholders and customary rights, only Zambian elites and foreign investors appear to currently hold title to land. This is mostly due to the lack of knowledge about the changes disseminated to the general population.

Since 2009, Zambia's reliance on foreign aid has drastically decreased. In 2010, Zambia received a concessional loan from China to finance infrastructure and would be about 40 percent of the national budget. Reduced reliance on "traditional partners" after the loan led to a dramatic decrease in aid dependency, reducing the national budget's aid constitution to only about eight percent. Similar investments with non-traditional donors such as India and Brazil allowed Zambia to continue a similar path towards aid independence<sup>49</sup>. With the economic growth seen due to a hike in copper prices, Zambia

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<sup>48</sup> Taylor Brown, "Contestation, confusion, corruption: Market-based land reform in Zambia," In *Competing Jurisdictions: Settling Land Claims in Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2005), 84.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Krageland, "Donors go home: non-traditional state actors and the creation of development space in Zambia," *Third World Quarterly* 35 (2014).

has experienced “booming commodity prices, a relatively stable economy and the resultant improved credit ratings”<sup>50</sup>.

Aid transparency has not become a central focus for the Zambian government as of 2014, and the few moves to increase aid tracking have been abandoned. There is no formal aid inflow tracking system. However, USAID highlighted some moves that have been made for furthering objectives, such as donor collaboration. The Ministry of Finance and Planning, similar to that of Ghana, is the portion of the Zambian government that tracks aid influx, though this process is done manually and other line ministries oftentimes overstep the MoF to gather data themselves. Discrepancies that result are left unresolved, and “the development cooperation portfolio incomplete or piecemeal”<sup>51</sup>. Other institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health track aid inflows through a commitment to transparency by both the Zambian government and donors – the Mutual Accountability Framework. While this practice of tracking aid disbursement is a major step towards anti-corruption measures, the procedure is still imperfect and inefficient with lack of coordination between ministries characterizing the process – not all information on funding flows are given to the MoF through these other ministries. Cumbersome, manual processes to track where aid money goes further hinder institutional attempts to find aid funding misuse, and the spreadsheet of information on projects, donors, and funding is generally not released to the public. What little information is released through the annual official report on government expenditures, “The Blue Book”, does not include all projects but only the highly visible and valuable

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<sup>50</sup> Krageland, “Donors go home: non-traditional state actors and the creation of development space in Zambia,” 153.

<sup>51</sup> “Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment,” 18.

ones. Similar to Ghana, Zambia sees low levels of information given online, paired with a lack of access to the internet.

USAID and the Zambian government have recognized the need for the public to hold the process of foreign aid effectiveness to higher standards. Currently, only a couple NGOs within the country have focused on civil society's role in monitoring anti-corruption measures as well as tracking government spending. Zambian stakeholders have called on the media to voice the concerns of the Zambian people who are particularly concerned about the objectives and progress of particular projects through the use of newspapers, radio, and internet (when accessible). However, there have been strong restrictions placed on independent civil society organizations, specifically non-governmental organizations, such as legislation allowing the government to cancel registration and restrict funding from outside sources. Many press members have voiced concerns of government restrictions on media outlets and their access to information, which in turn hinders the dissemination of this information to the public. While the public's concern with the availability of information does not necessarily focus specifically on aid inflows, there is a desire for the government to be held more accountable. Anti-corruption measures such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Zambia do not focus specifically on the misuse of foreign aid funds, but do require that the government's budget remains more open and accessible, especially when looking at specific public projects<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> "Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment."

### III. Swaziland

Scoring a 43 and ranked 69<sup>th</sup> of 175 countries measured, Swaziland is below the median and more corrupt than not. The absolute monarchy has a 53 percent for the control of corruption measure and a score relatively close to the median at -0.1592. Of the three countries analyzed, Swaziland interestingly does not show any measure for the open budget index, but rather data is unavailable for any year of this Corruption Perceptions measures. Global competitiveness is very similar to the other two countries with regards to the score, 3.28/7, though Swaziland's ranking is much further from both Zambia and Ghana at 135/142. The independence of the judiciary makes Swaziland 79<sup>th</sup> of 142 with a score of 3.6/7, far from Ghana's score and more towards a stronger judiciary dependence and influence. Rule of law is 38 percent with a score of -0.4958. The press freedom index is the worst rank of the three countries examined, ranking Swaziland as the 144<sup>th</sup> of 179 countries and scoring a 67. Voice and accountability likewise show dismal numbers with Swaziland at only the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile with a score of -1.2680, the closest to full lack of voice and accountability than the other countries analyzed<sup>53</sup>.

The OECD break up of foreign aid for Swaziland is drastic, with the highest percentage (77 percent) of aid going to the health and population sector. The other sectors remain below ten percent including that of social infrastructure (seven percent) and education (four percent)<sup>54</sup>. This is primarily due to Swaziland holding the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDs in the world and international efforts, particularly by the US, to combat these levels. Given the shortage and depletion of resources paired with dramatic

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<sup>53</sup> "Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results."

<sup>54</sup> "Aid at a glance by recipient."

prevalence of HIV/AIDs related deaths, those within Swaziland are seeking jobs and opportunities elsewhere. This is particularly evident in the health workforce. Swaziland is witnessing mass departure of health practitioners due to lack of education, work, and salary. The country has no medical school so students must go abroad in order to receive a medical degree. Likewise, the loss of nurses due to HIV/AIDs is so severe the output of new nurses is not enough to compensate for emigration and deaths. The population of nurses and other health practitioners within Swaziland is mostly foreign<sup>55</sup>. This reality makes clear the association of high health and population aid distributed to Swaziland, though the corruption literature on this foreign aid is more a general statement on the nature of aid given, rather than specific to Swaziland as a case-study.

Corruption is largely a part of Swazi culture, dominated by the relation of Swazi citizens to King Mswati III and government officials. In 1973, the standing king suspended the constitution and banned political parties, continuing with the absolute, hereditary rule until 2007. Due to pressure from the international community, domestic pressures, and as a condition for further aid provisions, the country then saw more movement towards anti-corruption legislation and government participation for increased transparency. All historic programs had proved unfruitful including the 1993 Prevention of Corruption Order and the 1998 Anti-Corruption Commission, both institutions that had weak structure, low administration commitments, and financial leverage. The 2006 program mirrored these previous efforts, responding to international pressures for

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<sup>55</sup> Kathrina Kober and Wimm Van Damme, "Public sector nurses in Swaziland: can the downturn be reversed?" *Human Resources for Health* 4 (2006).

funding, though failing to prosecute or investigate any related parties through actualization of the process<sup>56</sup>.

Along with these measures was the implementation of the sector wide approach where Sector Working Groups (SWGs) would, “provide the forum for policy dialogue and coordination within and between the government and other stakeholders (including the donors and non-state actors)”<sup>57</sup>. This institutional change is a movement within the monarchy to create institutions and sectors similar to that of Ghana and Zambia, within which anti-corruption measures can begin. However as of 2011, the sectors showed little organization and ability to strategize for development changes. Aid policy adopted in 1999 essentially split ODA into loans and grants amongst the Ministry of Finance and other ministries, even with attempts to assist ODA management functions with the Aid Management and Coordination Section (ACMS). The fragmentation created many ineffective and complex channels by which the Swazi government coordinates with donors:

The challenges presented by ACMS in terms of fulfilling its mandate include, fragmented efforts in resource mobilization, that line ministries initiate and conclude resource mobilization without involving ACMS, that some donors give aid to Swaziland without liaising with ACMS, poor coordination and the fact that there is no holistic picture of how much aid is received by the Kingdom and no system to properly monitor commitments and disbursements of ODA. Some development partners tend to liaise directly with the respective central ministries in accordance with the funding modality i.e. loans or grants. It is also evident that other ministries are also from time to time negotiating funding loans and grants directly with development partners.<sup>58</sup>

Overall, the distribution of aid within Swaziland is largely hindered by the complete lack of a system to accurately track the spending of donor financing, similar to that of Zambia.

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<sup>56</sup> Hamilton Siphon Simelane, “The Swazi Monarchy and the Poor Performance of the Swazi Anti-Corruption Agency, 2006–2009,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47 (2012).

<sup>57</sup> “Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development,” 6.

<sup>58</sup> “Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development,” 9.

While aid is largely tied to the conditionality of better governance, Swaziland's monarch tends to tout the need for transparency legislation, but lacks actualization of these promises entirely<sup>59</sup>. It is worth noting that of the three countries examined, Swaziland is given a significantly low amount of ODA as a whole, with only 85.9 USD million total allocated to the area<sup>60</sup>.

## Analysis

Case Study	Ghana	Zambia	Swaziland
Amount of bilateral aid (USD million)	1126.4	994.6	85.9
General Corruption Score (TI)	48	43	38
General Corruption Rank (TI)	61/175	85/175	69/175
Control of Corruption (TI)	0.0889	-0.5734	-0.1592
Open Budget Index (TI)	54 (some)	36 (minimal)	No data
Global Competitiveness (TI)	3.79/7	3.8/7	3.28/7
Judicial Independence (TI)	4.1/7	3.5/7	3.6/7
Rule of Law (TI)	-0.0717	-0.4939	-0.4958
Press Freedom Index (TI)	11	30	67
Voice and Accountability (TI)	0.4937	-0.3643	-1.2680
Main institution(s) to track distribution	MoF, line ministries	MoF, line ministries	MoF (loan component only), Sector Working Groups (SWGs)
Automated aid management platform (as of 2014)	No	No	No
Internet connectivity (% of pop)	17%	15.4%	No data

The hard data and measurements provided by Transparency International show trends and patterns between the three countries in the general ranking and score, and also for each specific measurement. On the whole, Ghana is ranked and scored as the cleanest country of the three examined, based on the general corruption measures and the Corruption Perceptions Index. This means that Ghana's public sector is perceived to be

<sup>59</sup> "Country Profiles," BBC News, accessed May 14, 2016, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country\\_profiles/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm).

<sup>60</sup> "Aid at a glance by recipient."



the cleanest. This comes as no surprise, and appears consistent with the hypothesis, considering Ghana was ranked as the freest of the three countries through the Freedom House measures. The institutions that generate Ghanaian democratic society are, according to Transparency International's data, stronger and more efficient at combating corruption than the others examined. Where the data show deviation from the hypothesis is with Swaziland and Zambia for the general corruption perceptions as well as the specific data on political rights and civil liberties. Swaziland ranked and scored higher than Zambia for the general corruption measures, though came closer to Ghana's ranking than that of Zambia. This is surprising data considering Swaziland is an absolute monarchy that shows little use of democratic institutions, while Zambia is considered democratic and was ranked as partially free for the Freedom House measures.

Each specific corruption measurement shows consistency with the hypothesis primarily for Ghana – Ghana is ranked more open, free, and fair for six of the seven analyses. Swaziland and Zambia, however, not only continue to deviate from the hypothesis, but also show varying trends from one measurement to the next. Control of corruption places Ghana as governed better by a significantly higher margin (above the median). Zambia shows the lowest score and therefore the worst governance for corruption control while Swaziland shows governance more on par with Zambia's low number, though slightly better. The open budget index is a bit more challenging to assess seeing as Transparency International has no data for Swaziland. The reason for this could be that the country has no budget information available for the public, or that Transparency International was simply unable to generate any data for other methodological reasons. That aside, Ghana still shows consistency by having at least

some budget openness while Zambia only has minimal. Judicial independence and rule of law again place Ghana as the most independent and governed the best, respectively.

Swaziland, while having a more independent judiciary than Zambia, is only about .1 off from Zambia's score. Their levels of independent judiciary are therefore very similar. For rule of law, Zambia again comes in last by an insignificant difference from Swaziland (.002). For these two measurements, Zambia and Swaziland could essentially be ranked on par with one another. The press freedom index shows a bit more differentiation between scores. Ghana scores the best with a largely free press while Swaziland is ranked the worst. Finally, Ghana shows better governance for voice and accountability while Swaziland shows the worst by a much greater margin than Zambia and Ghana do from each other. Global competitiveness is the only measure whereby Ghana's place is shifted. Zambia is ranked as more competitive globally, with Ghana coming in second and Swaziland last. However, the numbers for each country are very similar, with less than a full point between each. On the whole, Ghana shows lower levels of corruption at a significantly better margin than both Zambia and Swaziland, while Zambia surprisingly does not rank as high for the different measures as expected given the Freedom House measurements.

Aside from the hard Transparency International data, corruption also "... needs to be addressed by demands for reform on a sector-by-sector basis"<sup>61</sup>. Foreign aid sector divisions can distinguish the specific areas within which corruption may occur and can be more appropriately challenged. For the OECD breakdown of foreign aid distribution in the countries studied, there are four sectors that attracted the largest amounts of ODA – education; health and population; social infrastructure; and economic infrastructure.

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<sup>61</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*, 6.

These sectors are not only focused on for aid distribution, but are likewise widely prone to corruption without regard to foreign aid<sup>62</sup>.

The education sector is particularly prone to corruption due to its sentimental value, various small-scale distribution avenues, and multiple levels of decision-making bodies. Undermining of the educational system leads to an undermining of overall development goals and economic progress. Petty corruption in the educational system is carried out by more local level officials, through acts of bribery, fraud, gift giving, incompetence, etc. In this sector, it is the central ministry, or the leaders at the top making important decisions regarding explicit governmental funding that has the potential to divert funds from both government accounts and international assistance funds. From the top of the ladder, the effects of corruption trickle down to infiltrate the lower, local agencies including teachers and their classrooms. The health care sector, which constitutes even larger portions of assistance, especially in Swaziland with 77 percent of ODA allocated for HIV/AIDS prevention and other health services, shows similar trends of hierarchy and potential for funding misuse. Corruption in health is made possible due in large part to the various avenues of services, procurement, and overall health care demand. The resulting failure of the sector due to corruption results in bribes, theft, and inefficient or unethical services, “As health services fail, people end up having to pay out-of-pocket for services that are supposed to be free, with the burden falling disproportionately on the poor”<sup>63</sup>. Larger infrastructural projects, both social and economic, that are funded by donors through foreign assistance would naturally result in similar issues. If any sort of project utilizing foreign aid funds was created by the

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<sup>62</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*.

<sup>63</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*, 44.

government and high officials, the use of the money at lower levels would require specific accountability measures to ensure effective utilization<sup>64</sup>.

In each of these sectors, there is a necessity for complex collaboration between varying levels of government, down to the locals and citizens carrying out the actualization of each sector project or objective. The much larger issue of government incompetence within grand corruption is the sort of issue directly affecting how foreign aid money is spent. Inefficiency and ineptitude at the higher government levels leads to an inability of lower level officials and locals to appropriately manage sectors. Oftentimes, the inability of the government to effectively provide services to constituents requires that the citizens then take measures into their own hands simply in order to survive and make a living. The perception that corruption is simply a part of society and culture, resulting from an unchangeable government, creates a sense of acceptance or attitude that “this is just the way it is”. Grand corruption is then a matter of appropriate leadership – leaders who “respect the rule of law, emphasize transparency in the operation of the offices they oversee, take action against subordinates found violating rules, and exhibit integrity in their own transactions can make a difference”<sup>65</sup>.

The necessary measure to combat corruption through governmental misuse is for some form of accountability approach or means by which to track the funds directly as they work their way through the government to lower levels of society. When governments have systems in place to track the spending of each grant or loan, siphoning of this money is more difficult. The Ministry of Finance is one form of institutional measure mentioned in the data that has the potential to establish a tracking measure and

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<sup>64</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*.

<sup>65</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*, 71.

was seen in each of the three countries. Still, the caveat with this conclusion is that this tracking measure requires that the availability of that information to the general public exists as well. Cumbersome manual processes to track aid inflows were noticed along with an inadequacy of citizens to understand information, if it is accessible. Low internet connectivity and high expenses for mobile internet access creates strong restrictions on availability. Zambia and Swaziland show very obvious restrictions on the obtainability of this information. Ghana, on the other hand, showed higher levels of transparency and information availability.

Without government transparency to back accountability measures, there are easy avenues for elites to continue misuse of public funds, disguised as general anti-corruption commitments and façade institutions. The differentiation between each country examined is in the government's public commitment to tackle the issues at hand along with actualization of the process. While Zambia showed no significant commitment to establish anti-corruption measures or for the government to provide accountability measures, the Ghanaian government did. Swaziland likewise established a commitment, but the monarchy did not follow through on their promise to actualize anti-corruption measures. Again, Ghana showed the strongest measures for voice and accountability as well as freedom of the press. Swaziland and Zambia showed dismal numbers in this regard. While Swaziland established a commitment to tackle corruption, the country lacks proper measures for tracking aid inflows and lacks avenues for constituents to influence governmental policy. Zambia lacks the institution, the public commitment for action, and necessary influence by its citizens.

In democracies, the electoral process is an avenue through which citizens can directly influence the government and establish a significant voice. Therefore, corruption can be combatted by elections – “...an increase in perceived corruption is effectively punished by voters in the general election”<sup>66</sup>, meaning voters will get rid of corrupt elites rather than re-elect them. Research has also shown that voters express their concerns regarding corruption more so in parliamentary systems than presidential. However, Africa in particular, maintains a culture of neopatrimonialism and well-established patron-client relationships, so elections become another avenue for elites to assert their control. Ghana shows evidence of officials abusing their status in light of the 1992 democratic revival – the existence of competitive democratic elections only resulted in continued violation or disagreement on rules of conduct, creating an atmosphere of patronage that was characterized by violence and coercion<sup>67</sup>. As with many other African elections, the disguise of democratic elections acted as another platform for elites to assert their control and mute the voices of their constituents:

Therefore, contests among rival political groups for access to, and control of, public office have caused electoral politics to degenerate into fierce ‘all or zero sum’ games, thereby making the electoral process and the elections little more than state-sanctioned power struggles between competing leaders or factions.<sup>68</sup>

Rather than elections solving political crises and supporting true democratic values, they simply became measures to gain donor support for regime change, and increased competition amongst officials for political power. Zambia shows significant evidence of clientelism in their voting process, meaning a mutual benefit can be accrued from private

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<sup>66</sup> Stefan Krause and Fabio Méndez, “Corruption and Elections: An Empirical Study For A Cross-Section of Countries,” *Economics and Politics* 21 (2009), 195.

<sup>67</sup> Emmanuel Debrah, “The electoral process and the 2000 general elections in Ghana,” In *Liberal Democracy and Its Critics in Africa*, edited by Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, 125-144. (Dakar: Codestria Books, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> Emmanuel Debrah, “The electoral process and the 2000 general elections in Ghana,” 143.

benefits in exchange for political loyalty. However, the direct exchange of these benefits need not be required for clientelism to take place:

An intermediate form of clientelism would involve a hierarchy starting with elites who have access to government funds. These elites then filter the funds through more local intermediaries, and thus this form of clientelism would similarly not rely on direct, personal exchanges.<sup>69</sup>

In the political environments of each country, the connection elites have to their constituencies as a whole is minimal at most. Voters are more likely to vote for politicians that encourage development projects and public use of money, rather than private gain. Yet, the danger of this understanding is, again, that the ability of the electoral process to hinder corruption relies upon the constituents' knowledge that corruption exists in the first place. "Pervasive narrowness of the political arena, the subtle means by which the press is intimidated and subdued, and the variety of tactics incumbents use to manipulate electoral process and delegitimize the opposition,"<sup>70</sup> so that political insiders are rewarded, while regular citizens are ignored.

## Conclusions

High levels of democratization are inversely related to levels of corruption in foreign aid usage. Low levels of foreign aid corruption then can result in increased effectiveness of development interventions and therefore increased overall development. However, this research likewise concludes that the initial hypothesis on foreign aid corruption and democracy correlations is incomplete. This study shows that democratic institutions are not the only thing influencing the prevalence of corruption within certain societies – there are a large number of other factors that create a breeding ground for the

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<sup>69</sup> Daniel J. Young, "Is Clientelism at Work in African Elections? A Study of Voting Behavior in Kenya and Zambia: A Comparative Series of National Public Attitude Surveys on Democracy, Markets and Civil Society in Africa." *AfroBarometer Working Papers* 106 (2009): 1.

<sup>70</sup> Emmanuel Debrah, "The electoral process and the 2000 general elections in Ghana," 126.

misuse of public funds. Democratization cannot be divorced from foreign aid, however as necessary as democracy is to foreign aid usage, it is not a sufficient condition.

Indistinguishable from the need to have democratic structures such as open, free, and fair elections, is an understanding the constituents' desire to reduce corruption within society and the ability of citizens to connect with their leaders through their own voice. This all culminates around the relationship created by the existence of a sovereignty contract, whereby government remains responsive and dependent upon their constituents and the constituents likewise provide the government with legitimacy. This being understood, the hypothesis is correct in that an increase in the level of democracy creates positive externalities for the effectiveness of aid distribution and overall development. Ghana, which comparatively holds more effective democratic institutions, likewise saw lower levels of corruption. Zambia and Swaziland, lacking not only the institutional strength but also constituent influence, saw higher levels of corruption. The hypothesis is then incomplete given the nuances of Zambian and Swazi constituent commitment to anti-corruption and availability of information.

Foreign aid delivered with conditionalities such as policy and regime changes need change the definition of "good governance" or "democracy". It is apparent that democracy exists in varying levels dependent upon the presence and implementation of civil liberties and political rights. While many African countries publicly declare themselves democratic, the violation of citizens' rights and control by the government creates an environment that could hardly be labeled liberal. Over time:

'More years of uninterrupted democracy should tend to reduce corruption'. Thus, 'in established democracies, where such norms [about public responsibility and accountability] are strong, people will regard corrupt practices as improper and



illegitimate', although 'openness and accountability will not reduce corruption unless [and until] existing social norms condemn it'<sup>71</sup>.

Yet, established democracies present challenges themselves. Long-term presence of democracy could reduce voter turn out, lowering the influence civil society has over high officials. Newly emerged democracies typically have larger voter turnout and participation.<sup>72</sup> Studies have shown that even successful democracies established over a significant period have a high prevalence of corruption.

To properly address the inconsistencies present within nominal democratic regimes, donors must prioritize and strategize the most effective conditions to require for tied aid. According to this study, those measures could be monitored by the presence of a tracking system by the Ministry of Finance, a significant institution to create free press or voice within civil society, or electoral changes to ensure truly competitive elections. Another way to perhaps ensure the equitable distribution of funds could lie in the sector differentiations as divided by the OECD. While corruption does not stay limited to one sector, using this approach in anti-corruption strategies has potential to generate more transparency and accountability<sup>73</sup>. Dividing anti-corruption measures into smaller portions places responsibility on the sectoral leaders through a commission or agency that can establish a clear, productive, efficient means to change. Likewise, placing constituents that are not members of the governmental elite in charge of public fund distribution has the potential to limit elite misuse.

Moving forward with this information and understanding what measures potentially hinder the prevalence of corrupt foreign aid use, policy recommendations

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<sup>71</sup> Taylor, "Divergent Politico-Legal Responses to Past Presidential Corruption in Zambia and Kenya: catching the 'big fish', or letting him off the hook?" 283.

<sup>72</sup> Krause and Méndez, "Corruption and Elections: An Empirical Study For A Cross-Section of Countries".

<sup>73</sup> Spector, *Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries*.

could accompany bilateral aid to ensure donor and constituent interests are maintained in the distribution process. First, the creation of a database such as the UNDP mandated in Swaziland could have strong potential to change the process of aid tracking. With a manageable, user-friendly, all-encompassing mechanism to input sector-based projects and consistently manage the projects, the money could be better tracked. However, creation of a database must also address the internet accessibility issue present within each of these countries. Therefore, donor commitments and project specific information must be made readily available to constituents through varying mediums. While the internet must act as one avenue for information dissemination, printed issues need be included as well. Even small changes to the giving of specific grants and loans will create a stronger tracking mechanism that is solely for the use of the public. Once this information is made easily accessible, demand for government accountability and transparency will be stronger.

The fluidity of corruption definitions inevitably means that the practice has many dimensions that make recognition of the larger issue more difficult. The Transparency International corruption measures are solely based on the public's perception of how corrupt their government is. For a society, such as Swaziland, that perpetuates corrupt practices as a social norm, the perceived corruption could be much lower than the amount of corrupt exchanges and relationships. Those who believe corrupt practices are simply a way of life, those who have never been exposed to fair transactions, would perhaps not consider anti-corruption a major concern. For anti-corruption policy to be effective, and for donor funds to create development, the public need be informed of the larger issue. It is important to consider this when looking at the study's results as well as other factors

that influenced the data – reliance on proxy data may provide limitations that actual fieldwork might not.

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## Appendix on Faith and Learning

In my life, I have been situated between two extreme ways of thinking that exemplify the division between those with faith and those without. The religious foundations of this Christian university have challenged my experience as a non-believer, alongside a now secular family. Yet, my time at Seattle Pacific has not been polarizing. There is diversity of thought from within the Christian tradition that I grew to understand. I have come to respect those who believe, while I would hope they respect my pursuit of understanding. Having spent the last three years as a minority by way of faith has deeply affected how I have committed to live my life.

“If one believes that our species is no more than what has so far evolved, there is hardly a convincing basis for treating all people as having equal rights or for special concerns for the weak and the disadvantaged.”<sup>74</sup> On the contrary to this sort of exclusive language, I believe being situated outside of religion and still committing to moral behaviors is deeply important and possible. Attending SPU has opened my mind more about the Christian tradition than I felt possible. I found myself deeply committed to understanding this world I sat only at the edge of. Recently, a fellow University Scholar voiced his admiration for my having stuck with the program seeing how he knew I held no religious beliefs. This comment struck me deeply. I continued with the program out of sheer curiosity, sheer desire to understand something drastically differently from a faith perspective and in other disciplines outside my knowledge. I believe scholarship is a commitment to this desire for understanding, “The primary task of scholarship is to ‘pay attention’ to the world – or at least, to some part of the world – with a sense of focus,

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<sup>74</sup> George M. Marsden, *The outrageous idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press), 87.

care, and intensity that non-scholars lack”<sup>75</sup>. However, scholarship does not end here, but rather continues to be a multidimensional pursuit of understanding – “Scholars also reflect on the different ways they pay attention to the world; they are methodologically self-conscious”. I believe the ability to entertain a thought and to be curious without devoting oneself to that belief is a testament to true scholarship. There is a sort of moral basis in this as well. Respect and admiration for those who are different is essential. This is the devoting of oneself to equality and open-mindedness both within a scholarship setting and without. My ethical commitments concern fairness and equal opportunity for anyone to voice their opinions. I hope to respect all who cross my path, regardless of their faith background, socioeconomic status, culture, race, or ethnicity.

This desire for equality has translated into my own discipline. It is essential for me to understand those around the world who perhaps do not have the freedoms or equalities that we, in the Western world, enjoy. The rights to have clean water, food, healthcare, freedom of expression, and equality drive my own scholarship and my life. International Affairs as a discipline allows me to examine not only the developmental aspects of other countries, but also opens my eyes to the necessary political institutions that essentially provide, or should provide, for their citizens. I believe through the understanding of governmental relationships, country histories, and cultural differences, equal opportunities can be obtained.

Tracy Kidder’s *Mountains Beyond Mountains* has been one of the most influential pieces of literature for understanding who I am. Paul Farmer’s approach to helping those in Haiti and around the world is one of the most striking and inspiring stories to be read.

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<sup>75</sup> Douglas G. Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

In many ways, his story speaks to me. Raised Catholic, Farmer identifies with some aspects of his religious background though is not an avid practitioner of the faith. On the contrary, his commitments are to the poor, the dying, and the suffering. His story is a true testament to the pursuit of equality. However, one could argue against his approach. Does Farmer's role as an "absent" father undermine the goodness of his altruism? Does his lack of worship change the fact that he has single-handedly saved hundreds of lives? I would say absolutely not. The commitment Farmer has made is for the greater good and while humans cannot be perfect, his use of scholarship and morality have done wonders for many people. My scholarship includes an intense focus on some part of the world, though the creativity, self-expression, and hard work required of scholarship involves acting upon that which I have learned. In my life and my discipline, the knowledge I gain will be utilized to act and help those around me. Farmer exemplifies this as well. Having done his academic work at Harvard, his actions, utilizing this knowledge, are what have saved lives and inspired the world. Farmer stewards his own gifts for the benefit of others. His focus revolves around the greater good and he is willing to sacrifice some niceties in order to pursue his passions. I would argue this is the deepest commitment to morality possible.

The nuances of my belief will never be worked out nicely. However, I intend to continue pursuing further understanding in order to know the person I inherently am. My discipline, scholarship, and further life paths will hopefully aid in this understanding. I hope that my commitment to understanding and equality will only increase in time and further experience. What my past and current situation has taught me is that regardless of



whom we attribute our existence or our morality, “we’re all human beings”<sup>76</sup> and it is our duty to utilize this understanding of equality to face the problems of the world.

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<sup>76</sup> Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks), 80.